

REMARKS

Applicants concurrently file herewith an Excess Claim Fee Payment Letter for two (2) excess independent claims.

Applicants concurrently file herewith a petition and fee for a two (2)-month extension of time.

Claims 5, 9-21, and 85-109 are all of the claims presently pending in the application.

Claims 5, 9, 16, 85, 87 and 89 have been amended to more particularly define the invention.

Claims 1-4, 6-8, and 84 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

It is noted that the claim amendments are made only for more particularly pointing out the invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims or for any statutory requirements of patentability. Further, Applicant specifically states that no amendment to any claim herein should be construed as a disclaimer of any interest in or right to an equivalent of any element or feature of the amended claim.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 10-21 and 90-109 are allowed and that claims 5, 9, 88 and 89 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. However, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims are allowable.

However, merely in an effort to speed prosecution, claims 5, 9, 88 and 89 have been rewritten in proper independent form.

Claims 1-4, 6-8, and 84-87 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by LaComb (U.S. Patent No. 6,256,330).

Applicants respectfully submit that LaComb does not teach or suggest the claimed invention of claims 1-4, 6-8 and 84-87. However, merely in an effort to speed prosecution, Applicants have canceled claims 1-4, 6-8, and 84, and have amended claims 85 and 87 to change the dependency so that claims 85-87 now depend from allowable claim 88. Applicants respectfully submit that the cancellation of claims 1-4, 6-8 and 87, and the amendment of claims 85-87 hereby renders moot the Examiner's rejection.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 5, 9-21, and 85-109, all of the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above

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application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

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